

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15

STR-04 CEA-01 L-03 H-01 PA-01 PRS-01 IO-13 /108 W

-----038862 020535Z /17

R 020316Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8327

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 5037

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEAN, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET VIEWS ON ASEAN

1. DURING SOVIET AMBASSADOR BENDRYSHEV'S RETURN CALL ON ME JULY 29 I ENGAGED HIM IN A DISCUSSION OF ASEAN. I ASKED WHETHER HE HAD SEEN FOREIGN MINISTER RITHAUDDEEN'S REPORTED STATEMENT IN THE LOCAL PRESS THAT MORNING RAISING THE POSSIBILITY OF ASEAN CONSULTATIONS WITH EASTERN EUROPE (SEPTTEL). HE APPARENTLY HAD NOT SEEN IT, BUT EXPRESSED DOUBTS THAT SUCH CONSULTATIONS WOULD BE USEFUL, SINCE MALAYSIAN TRADE WITH EASTERN EUROPE WAS NOT GREAT. HE WONDERED WHETHER SUCH AN IDEA WAS NOT POLITICALLY MOTIVATED TO DEMONSTRATE ASEAN'S NON-ALIGNMENT.

2. BENDRYSHEV THEN OBSERVED THAT ASEAN WAS AT A CROSSROADS:

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IT COULD EITHER DEVELOPE IN WAYS THAT WOULD PROMOTE PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE ENTIRE REGION, OR IN WAYS DESIGNED TO HEIGHTEN DIVISIONS AND TENSIONS BETWEEN ASEAN AND INDOCHINA. HE SAID THAT, UNFORTUNATELY, ASEAN WAS CURRENTLY PURSUING THE LATTER COURSE. IN ELABORATION, HE SAID THAT THE VIETNAMESE, "PROUD PEOPLE", SAW ASEAN CONCENTRATING ON DEVELOPING TIES WITH COUNTRIES WITH SECURITY

LINKS TO THE U.S. (JAPAN, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, CANADA, THE EEC), RATHER THAN ON GETTING TOGETHER WITH INDOCHINA TO BUILD GENUINE PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE REGION. I SAID I THOUGHT THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE REGION WOULD BE GREATER IF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES, THROUGH REGIONAL COOPERATION, DEVELOPED THEIR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STRENGTH BECAUSE THE INDOCHINA STATES WOULD GRADUALLY REALIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF TRADE AND OTHER RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. CONTRARY TO THE SOVIET VIEW, I THOUGHT THAT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEAKNESS IN THE ASEAN REGION, WOULD BREED TENSIONS AND STRAINS WITH INDOCHINA.

3. I NOTED THAT VIET-NAM, FROM BENDRYSHEV'S COMMENTS, SEEMED TO WANT TO COOPERATE WITH ASEAN ONLY ON VIET-NAM'S TERMS, WHILE ASEAN AND THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS SEEMED TO ME TO BE WILLING TO DISCUSS COOPERATION WITH OTHER NATIONS, INCLUDING INDOCHINA, ON A MUTUAL BASIS. BENDRYSHEV THEN SAID THAT ASEAN NATIONS' INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS ALSO CONSTITUTED AN OBSTACLE TO RECONCILIATION WITH INDOCHINA. I ASSUME BY THIS BENDRYSHEV MEANT THE ASEAN COUNTRIES' EFFORTS TO DEAL STERNLY WITH THEIR INTERNAL INSURGENCIES.

MILLER

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